1: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

[643] ruled his country in the humanest and wisest of benevolent autocracies,
181 since the treaty of 1892 placed him on the throne of his murdered father
609 and parricide brother—to our humbler neighbours in Aliabad, the
village four miles below the capital which we made our headquarters
for fifteen months. As soon as the people grasped the purpose of our
[212] coming (which was not easy to explain to an illiterate people) they were
overjoyed that a ' Sahib ' should trouble to learn their vernacular—
a thing which no white man or woman had done before—and take an
interest in their customs and hereditary lore. At first they would
hesitate : ' but you have wheels (=machines) in England, and can do
all these things better than we can '. Within a few days they were
vying with each other in explaining, demonstrating and bringing
ploughs, looms, winnowing forks, bows, stone cooking pots to the
resthouse where we were installed, that D.L. might measure them and
take ' studio portraits ' of them, ' for you mustn't put anything in the
book about us that isn't exactly true '.

● 132 The entire life of the Hunzukuts is centred in water. The rain-
312 fall in the oasis level (7–9,000 feet), is negligible—we reckoned less
361 than 2 inches per annum ; in default of any means of raising the
water, the river, flowing between its crumbly earthen cliffs, 500 or 1,000
feet below their fields is useless for irrigation ; there are no springs or
wells ; hence all water for all purposes must be trapped high up at the
snout of some side glacier and conveyed on galleried aqueducts across
yawning gorges and the faces of sheer cliffs. The main water channel,
the Dala, which supplies all the more recent villages of Hunza, ' the
new settlements ' as they are called in contradistinction to the three
original villages—Baltit the capital, Altit and Ganesh—travels some
8 or 10 miles in its circuitous route from the Herbèr glacier in the
gorge behind Baltit, cradled between snow-peaks of 23,000 feet, before
it peters out in a semicircular sweep round Aliabad.

312 The Dala was dug some three or four generations ago (90–100
412 years) with wooden shovels and wooden picks tipped with ibex horn,
816 and represents an amazing feat of engineering skill for people without
any instruments of precision. The sluices that control the distribu-
tion of water—every teaspoonful of which is rigorously allotted—are
of the simplest ; most often a slab of flattish stone plastered in with
mud, sometimes a wooden shutter sliding in a rude wooden frame,
sometimes when the water is being taken off to a lower level a circular
hole in a stone slab, closed at need with a mushroom-shaped stopper,
rough hewn from a solid tree trunk.

ANTIQUITY

402 ' machines ' known in Hunza, and the mechanism of all three is so simple that parts can be replaced, repairs or adjustments effected, by any intelligent child—and we met no *un*intelligent Hunza child.

286 Anyone desirous of doing so can acquire a weaver's skill, and in our village of some 200 families there were seven or eight expert weavers. The loom-pit is a hole in the ground, 2 feet wide and deep and 2 feet 4 inches from back to front, with a stone bench at the back. Two horizontal poles balanced on stones a couple of feet above the ground at either side carry the heddles, etc. Here the weaver sets up his home-made loom of ingeniously simple construction worked by four treadles in the bottom of his pit. While he works, the owners of the wool sit by and wind his bobbins. A skilful weaver can make the nine yards of narrow homespun required for a man's cloak in a day and a half. The loom-pit occupies fully half the width of the ' street ' and when being used forms the centre of a shifting group of cheerfully gossiping passers-by.

Goat's hair is woven on an even simpler upright frame, a forked piece of tree supplying the single shed required.

322 Turning is a rarer accomplishment than weaving, and our village boasted only one lathe-master. Like the loom the lathe is set up in a pit. The person desiring a bowl supplies the necessary rough-hewn block of wood (apricot or vine root preferred) and the motive power required to turn the horizontal bar, on to one end of which the wood is spiked. The turner crouches alongside with a selection of small curved chisels which he rests on an adjustable tripod to steady his hand (PLATE IV).

415 There is no room to tell of all the simple yet ingenious household utensils which the Hunzukuts conjure from the scanty resources
411 at their disposal : the spliced wooden bow faced with plates of ibex
322 horn and beautifully curved ; the boys' catapult bow with double string of horse sinew, for scaring birds ; the double-chambered wool-container made of rowan bark ; the small vessel like an ash-tray which steadies the woman's rotating spindle and is moulded from the refuse of the apricot kernels left after the oil has been expressed. Not a
372 shred of anything is wasted in Hunza. What cannot be eaten or turned
132 to use—even the shell of the apricot kernel—is gratefully seized on as fuel for the pitifully small fire that cooks the bread and vegetables. Fires for mere heating are an undreamt of luxury. Hence the draught-proof house is essential, for at 7–8,000 feet, with snow mountains all round and a temperature of 19° Fahrenheit, the ' Great Cold ' is

1: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

sufficiently severe. Happily winter is short, two or three months at most, and for the rest of the year day and night are spent mainly out of doors.

The social culture of the Burusho of Hunza is as high as their material culture is primitive. Three centuries of Islam—they are now Ismaili heretics, having been Shiahs until three or four generations ago—have not induced them to veil or despise their indomitable women, nor to abandon the wholesome tradition of exogamy between their different clans in favour of first-cousin marriage. They are freer from superstition and fanaticism than any people east or west of whom I have heard or read. Whatever be the esoteric teaching of the Ismailis of which Professor Ivanov might tell, it concerns the Hunza peasant as little as the homoousian controversy disturbs the mind of the British schoolboy. He goes his way in cheerful confidence that hard work, fair dealing, kindly affection and generosity must be as well pleasing to God the Merciful, the Compassionate, as ritual prayer or ceremonial fast, and his dreams are not broken by over-anxious fear of Hell or hope of Heaven.

The fastidiousness and personal cleanliness of the Hunza peasant are remarkable. Close packed amongst the crowd at festivals or sitting on the threshing floor amongst the workers, or entertained in their hospitable houses, we were never distressed by human exhalations or molested by parasites. The drinking water is guarded with scrupulous care from pollution by man or beast. Men and women cooperate without embarrassment or restraint and no work is taboo for either sex, though for obvious reasons the heavier jobs of wall-building, irrigation and ploughing fall more naturally to the man, and the care of infants to the woman. But as soon as the father is allowed to handle his child, he will carry the baby proudly and tenderly out for its first airings, while boys and girls alike play with and watch over the toddlers.

Again and again, in face of the high morality and unquenchable spirit of the Hunzukuts, we were ashamed to think of what in our vaunted civilization ' man has made of man '.

857 other up, chivvied their lambs and kids about by chucking stones skilfully to turn but not to hit them, and half a dozen noisy scamps would jump to and fro over the watercourse in competition.

361 Between us and the river bank were groups of poplars,
133 willows, and fruit trees with quaint cube-like stone houses dotted about in between, and right above this delightfully restful patch of green (which you could not properly appreciate if you had not had days and days of barren bleakness before you reached it), in the great triangular space between the barren mountains of Nagir and those of Hunza which rose around and behind us, there towered up the great mass of far the loveliest mountain on earth: RAKAPOSHI.

133 She is 25,550 feet high, and the top 10,000 feet which we saw from our window is a conical series of triangles, cliffs, precipices and peaks all covered in dazzling frozen snow—a never-ending joy to watch. At this time of year she was usually clear, escaping the skirts of the monsoon which are apt to catch on Nanga Parbat; and the clear sky behind changes from the palest blue at dawn to the brilliant burning blue of midday and then to delicate shades of pink, green, violet, and orange towards sunset. Ruskin could write volumes on the ever-changing shadows and colours that delighted us: I must leave them to the imagination. From our beds we could see Raka when we first woke and bid her good-night before we fell asleep. It is a wonderful thing when beauty such as this becomes part and parcel of your daily life.

132 It was still pretty hot in Hunza in July, in spite of our 7,600 feet. We had it up to 95° in the shade of the verandah outside, but were able to keep the study ten degrees cooler by closing doors and windows in the morning before the sun got up. Out in the sun the heat is all the fiercer for the altitude, a point stay-at-home travellers seldom realize. Another odd point is that in cloudless, dustless air like this, granted equal apparent brightness, photographic exposures need to be *longer* than lower down—at least this is David's experience.

157 The people round were from the first unbelievably friendly; we could run out quite informally at any moment and join

ILLNESS CALLS A HALT

Above and below us as we rode the barley harvest was being speedily gathered in; family groups were reaping, threshing, winnowing, while the more advanced were already hastily reploughing their land for various kinds of millet. Though the Hunza summer is short, the sun at these heights is hot, and with luck each hard-worked field will bear two crops a season. The barley field which is soonest clear will ripen a later crop of millet; the wheat field, ready a fortnight or three weeks later, will still be in time for one or other type of buckwheat. Barley must in olden days have been the standard crop, for all the sowing and harvest festivals centre round it. But the Hunzukuts[1] of to-day vastly prefers wheaten bread and sows as much wheat as he dares. Even the winter-sown wheat, however, ripens later than the spring barley, and since every ingenious device of agriculture only "just gives what life requires, but gives no more," he cannot afford to concentrate on wheat alone. Each year the peasant farmer makes his calculations afresh; experience has taught him much about the rotation of crops, the different varieties of grain that each field —according to soil, water, and aspect—can most profitably bear, and his gamble with nature is a highly intelligent one. In the opener fields of Aliábád we reckoned that the proportion of wheat to barley was roughly two to one, nearer Báltít one to two.

If later in the year you point to a field and ask "What crop is that?" the answer will not be "Such and such a millet, or such and such a buckwheat," but the name of the growing crop with the additional information "On top of wheat" or "On top of barley," which will give you the difference of some weeks in the date of sowing and probably also indicate some subtle difference in the quality of the soil if you have learnt enough basic agriculture to interpret the facts aright.

Our narrow mountain track skirted the face of a magnificent amphitheatre of storeyed cultivation, plunging every now and then into welcome belts of fruit trees, willows and poplars, crossing foaming mountain torrents in cracks of the hillside, none too easy to ford in July, though only rock-strewn gullies

[1] Hunzukuts is both singular and plural.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

in the summer), or that with luck we might see a doctor in a month or two. In our little home-town there are indignation meetings because we have to travel seven miles in a motor ambulance to reach our nearest hospital.

Another pleasant thing had been the presence of the Indian sub-assistant surgeon in charge of the local dispensary. True when you were sick you would echo George the What-ever-it-was: "Give the doctor my compliments and say I am too ill to see him," but he had a store of any simple drugs absent from our own medicine chest and he kindly acted as sanitary inspector and supervised the disposal of the kitchen refuse, etc., and directed the activities of the sweeper. This removed a source of possible anxiety.

Altogether things might have been a lot worse. It was perfectly maddening for David to have missed all these interesting weeks of the harvest; but he had seen something of it from his window, and from the verandah, and if he was pretty fit again by mid-September we still had an entire year's cycle ahead of us. And I had sat about a good deal in the fields (within sight of the house and within earshot of his whistle—though he never blew it), and made lots of friends and taken what notes I could with as much of my mind as was on the spot. It wasn't a lot, for I was often anxious and always rather underslept. But with luck we should fill in the missing bits next year.

The September weather was delightful; the "bitter" heat had gone, and it was like the best days of an early English summer, but with perfect dryness and the security we never have at home that to-morrow and the day after would equally be fine.

Before coming we had been afraid that further knowledge might reveal all sorts of mistakes in the Grammar and the Texts (now finally in print and about to appear). We were immensely relieved to find as we worked that there was *nothing* incorrect. It seemed almost incredible. A few difficult points could be further cleared up, but there was nothing to retract. The Vocabulary proofs were beginning to come—and a hideous fag it was correcting them!—but this gave opportunity to eliminate a few question marks and occasionally to

Chapter 16

HOME LIFE AT No. 1

293 WHEN the women are working in the fields through the heat
● [132] of the day—and it is very, very hot at 7,800 feet with a tem-
854 perature of 105° in the shade—they usually have a large square
482 of cotton cloth with them, which they sometimes throw over their heads for protection. This cloth turns in for all sorts of purposes; if you are carrying a small quantity of flour home from the mill you can wrap it up and tie it across from one shoulder to the other armpit and so keep both hands free. If the baby is too small to sit safely on your back or shoulders, you treat it in the same way. In fact, if you see a woman with this kind of bundle that appears to have two lumps in it you may safely guess that it's a baby.

342 I made great friends with the family who worked just below us (I have named them in my notebook Household No. 1), and I felt quite sad when their wheat harvest was over—it was so convenient just to run down and join them in sight of our own windows. They asked me, however: "Won't you come home and sit in our shade?" Of course I accepted with delight. It was just a few steps along the Dála and down one of the little lanes, half path, half watercourse. We came to a slightly taller, mud-plastered wall on the left with a wooden door in it. Through this I stepped in to a tiny courtyard with a shed on each side, one for straw and one for the lambs and kids. The
[333] house itself is just a rough cube of stones plastered with mud, and it has a flat roof with a smoke-hole in it above the central hearth. You go up by a ladder, and the roof makes a nice place for sitting out, watching the neighbours go by, spinning, and drying apricots. It has a second store-room built on a part of

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

capriciously from side to side between its beaches, was 500 or 600 feet sheer below, and the great crumbly earthen cliffs on each side were most ominous-looking precipices. There are no paths down them except where a side gorge comes in at intervals. At the spot where I struck the bank there had been a great fall of cliff not long before which had completely carried away a new aqueduct they were—rather too hopefully—trying to engineer across the face of it. If the aqueduct had been successful it would have coaxed some water from the Hasanábád glacier on to a jutting promontory, potentially fertile, but at the moment as bare as the palm of your hand. Six men went over and two of them were killed. Risks like this are all in the day's work in Hunza. People were still prospecting for a more hopeful alignment, but my amateur eyes could see no earthly possibility of getting anything to cling to the friable face of those terrifying cliffs. Meantime I stood well back from the edge! It was pathetic to see gardens and trees within two inches of the treacherous brink and to realize that the farmer on whose land I stood had lost a fertile field or two and half his orchard. I noted that I must go back some day when the light was right and see whether (without committing suicide) I could get a photograph right down the gorge with Raka, of course, rearing herself up in the background. When the light was good it was still very hot in the sun (88° in the shade on an October afternoon), and rocky scrambles over shadeless boulders with a climb of some hundreds of feet to get home were not exactly restful, and I'm not so young!

One autumn morning when I was on the prowl I found a man just about to turn on a small team of cows to thresh a pile of millet heads. He and his children were busy with this in the centre of the floor, while a neighbour and *his* family were beheading another variety at one side. Two or even three neighbours seem amicably to share one threshing floor so as not to waste valuable ground. So I squatted down as usual with my penknife and joined the beheading family and watched the threshing. Only three cows were in the team this time—the millet-heads make a very small heap in comparison with the

Chapter 23

WINTER AND THE "GREAT COLD"

132 No climate could be more delightful than the autumn and early winter of Hunza, from October till far on in December, and the Burusho make the most of these bracing, genial days, hurrying to get through every sort of outdoor job before the six or eight weeks of the "Great Cold."

245 Not by any means every household can spare water, manure, or space for a vineyard, but those who can value not only the fresh grapes which ripen later than all other fruits, but also the home-made wine which helps to brighten the cheerless [251] winter days. Unfortunately, by the time the grapes are ripe, the sun has already lost its heat and raisin-drying is impossible. At least this was the only plausible explanation we could get for the fact that the Hunzukuts who dry their mulberries and apricots do not make raisins.

The vines are trained over low pergolas only 3 or 4 feet high, less frequently allowed to climb up living trees. Since the Hunzukuts greatly value shady sitting places we wondered why they did not go in for loftier pergolas like those the Persians love. The explanation is cruelly simple—they cannot spare the extra length of poles.

There were not many vineyards in Aliábád, but we located two favourably situated ones and paid several visits to each. One was many hundred feet down, at Gulkhan, below the old fort. Though the vine leaves were still green, every bunch of 273 fruit had been already cut when we came down to see the wine-making. Under the roof of an open-faced shed were three "mangers," as it were, set side by side, the two end ones stacked high with ripe grapes. There must have been 3 or 4 cwt. at least in each. The centre one was only partially full.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

241 493 9 to 12 inches in diameter is impaled on one of the rungs to form the wheel. Axis and wheel rotate together in the two side holes of the frame, and to reduce the friction a tough ring of wicker work is placed between the wheel and the side of the ladder-frame. One of the usual shoulder baskets is then lashed between a pair of the rungs, and *voilà* . . . your apparatus is complete.

There were several batches of field-making enthusiasts whom we used to visit on our afternoon excursions—cold work it must have been with the snow lying to within a few feet of where they were working, but they did not seem to feel it, or perhaps the vision of future crops helped to keep them warm.

● 132 When once the Great Cold lays its icy hand on the country all outdoor human activity ceases as suddenly and completely as the sound of flowing water, and no one voluntarily stirs abroad. Occasionally you may see a woman, wrapped in the warmest *choga* available, dash with a gourd or bucket to the nearest drinking tank, break the thick crust of ice re-formed since yesterday and bring home the needed water. The steep, irregular stone steps were glassy with frozen water; it would have been easy to fall in and difficult to scramble out, but we heard of no casualties. Once again we noted that families prone to accident are weeded out by beneficent Mother Nature when her ways are not interfered with.

Once a day some man or boy drives out the beasts to the nearest open reservoir to drink, breaking the ice anew for them. As the water level sinks the ice crust cracks like pastry, the centre falls in, leaving stratum after stratum 6 or 8 inches thick adhering shelf-wise to the stone walls of the reservoir.

The winter was in many ways a disappointment to us. We had hoped for bright days and clear air and magnificent photographs. In fact, all the great mountains round were wrapped day after day in swathes of dark, snow-depositing cloud, and the floor of heaven, impenetrably grey, seemed suspended menacingly just a few inches above our heads. The immediate visible landscape was the dreariest it is possible to conceive; not an evergreen tree or bush, not a square inch of green grass to break the grim monotony of sepia-grey-khaki rocks, cliffs,

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

boulders, and gaunt tree-skeletons amidst which the cubes of stone-and-mud houses were indistinguishable save for the thin spiral of blue smoke that rose from their flat roofs at feeding time. 132

We were able to work on indoors, for informants were glad enough to come and sit by our fire and tell all they knew about any question asked, but we sorely missed the cheering chance encounters, the casual wayside chats that normally brightened our walks.

Indoors during the Great Cold the family is merry and happy enough. The recurrent tiny fire, whose ashes never quite grow cold and which is stirred into life at baking time, reinforced by human heat and not squandered by wanton draughts, keeps sufficient warmth alive for comfort, and the weeks of enforced leisure from outdoor work are thoroughly enjoyed. The women spin and sew and bake and tend the babies; the men mend and make their various implements; the children eagerly demand the right to help in every job for which they are ripe, while the old people come into their own and entertain the company by telling tales of every kind; not only nor even mainly tales of heroes and of kings, of raiding chiefs and bandit exploits from the good old days before the Serkár brought peace and security at the cost of adventure, nor folklore yarns borrowed from other times and climes—though they have good store of these; but the history of their country and its clans and anecdotes of every day. In this homely school the Hunza child learns all that it needs to know, the elements of ethics, morals, and religion, the accepted codes of decent behaviour, and all the accumulated wisdom of the land. 512 801 538

The Hunzukuts have no artistic gift of story-telling, and no professional story-tellers; they have no oral literature to match the Sagas of the North or the Persian wealth of the Thousand and One Nights, but they can tell a straightforward story simply and well and with considerable humour, and the phrases in which their yarns are couched have become sanctified and semi-stereotyped by frequent repetition. Some of these DL had recorded in 1923–24, and they were already in print when we returned to Hunza ten years later. We were surprised and 538

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

and horseplay, of course, but with both humour and first-class mimicry. A lot of the witticisms were lost on us, being in the nature of "family jokes" only to be understood by the initiate, but they must have hit the mark, for they brought down the house. At one point one of the humped old men produced a mysterious black box from under his sheepskin and flung himself into a skilful caricature of DL taking photographs, pacing distances, peeping through view-finders, jotting things in notebooks, etc., etc. This was the star turn, and had been kept for the end. It was greeted with roars and howls of laughter, in which we joined till our sides ached.

After about half an hour, when everybody had been beaten and banged and rolled about enough to be tired out, we scattered home, surprised afresh at the magic in the air that made a show like this possible at 19° F. on a winter evening.

As we climbed home the great mountains of Nagir across the river were looking their best in the evening light with massed patches of fresh-fallen snow and Raka resplendent in a new silver satin coat. But in many ways the winter snows—on the rare occasions when you can see them at all—are disappointing. We had pictured the whole land above, say, 10,000 feet one mass of snow; but in fact most of the cliffs and slopes are far too steep to *hold* snow, however much may fall, and while you do get magnificent stretches of pure white these are spoiled artistically by intervening scars of black and brown, khaki or dull grey. The topmost peak of Raka herself is a sheer rock-face of some thousands of feet whose grey austerity renders it almost invisible above the eternal snows beneath.

We had now reached the month which the people call "Crazy January," with its sudden and erratic storms of wind, and when the wind chooses to roar down these gorges from the glaciers then, by Jove! you do feel a temperature of 19°. We personally were lucky, for our bunaglow was in a kind of sheltered pocket—a fact we regretted during the hot weather—and even when a wild wind was hurtling round it seemed just to miss our windows.

Our sponges had been frozen solid for weeks and our bathrooms were not places to linger in, but it was cosy near

132 the fire—less cosy at our working-tables near the light—and when mealtimes came we would carry in a couple of blazing logs from the study to thaw the air of the dining-room. Lucky as we were about fuel, we could not afford a continuous fire in a second room. But wood is gracious stuff, and a quick blaze just for meals was better than nothing.

2; Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

Chapter 24

BARLEY SOWING AND "STARVATION SPRINGTIME"

AFTER weeks and weeks of dismal weather, which except for absence of rain or damp was about as cheerful as Fleet Street in December, we woke on February 1st to a white world, a glorious clear sky and SUNSHINE, so we downed tools and went out with our cameras to enjoy life again. When it snows here —a very rare phenomenon at this level, 7,600 to 8,000 feet— it is a disappointing sight. There are no "flakes" at all. It is as if Someone were very half-heartedly shaking the finest castor sugar out of one of those inefficient sugar-casters that people exchange as wedding presents. Even when it had snowed all night there was only a tiny sprinkling on the ground, and long before it was light enough to take a photograph with a Christmas-card foreground the stuff had evaporated, leaving you with the dark, empty fields.

It was delightful to see the whole place full of people again as if by magic. The old folk out on their roofs "taking the sun," and the whole place a-twitter with kiddies of every size. The little ones had been invisible for three months, and even the bigger ones rarely seen and in small numbers: partly because they really haven't enough clothes. They wear no under-things at all, and in the bitterest weather, though they may be huddled in a tattered *choga* or two, you see their bare chests peeping through their cotton shirts. Oddly, though they cuddle their *chogas* over their heads, they never dream of crossing them in front. If Papa happens to possess a padded coat from Yarqand or a skin coat with its own wool inside, the family is well off, and anyone who has to go out will take the

to have enough wool to spare for superfluities. The preciousness of boots accounts, I think, for a fact which puzzled us at first: you never see children, sporting as they are in every possible respect, sliding on the ice for fun. Boots are too valuable, and barefoot sliding would be a bit severe. Also, as David remarked, sliding and snowballing are games for such as can go home and change their clothes and get warm beside a nice big fire. These poor mites have at most one warm *choga* (and possibly a share of Father's on occasion) and a tiny fire at mealtimes only. Anyhow, they don't slide.

The bright weather of February 1st did not last, and though the cold was broken we reverted to gloomy grey weather and the ceiling of snow-cloud overhead. We knew that a week or two would bring the great festival of the Bopfau, or Barley Seed-Sowing, and we feared that it was going to take place in semi-darkness. But everyone assured us: "Oh no, it will be bright for the Bopfau." The great week drew near and we had heard no word from the Mir confirming his earlier invitation to come and stay at Kerimabad (his garden and rest-house in the park below the Fort at Báltít) for the occasion. We were beginning to fear that he had forgotten us and were wondering whether we could without offence remind him. Just as we were nearly in desperation and terribly afraid that we should wake some morning to be told that everything was over, a kind message came from him to say that he hoped we would come over on Wednesday afternoon. He himself would be away at Áltít, engaged with the preliminary ceremonies, but everything would be ready for us and we need only bring our own bedding. Now we knew that the GREAT DANCE was bound to take place on the Wednesday afternoon, and we feared that this meant that he did not specially want us at it—in which case, of course, there was nothing to be done.

We had a glorious ride over to Báltít on the Wednesday afternoon (of February 6th) in perfect weather, exactly as predicted. Various grandees had been told off to welcome us, a nice fire blazed in "our" beautifully furnished sitting-room, and the Mir's pet cook-for-European-guests, Mirza Hasan, was waiting with his best bedside manner to offer us tea. It was

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

supposed to be able to control rain and sun. It is said of the Mir's grandfather, Ghazan Khan, that he was so skilled in the art that he could cause rain to fall when wanted and ride unwetted through it! On the second afternoon, as we were riding home, the clouds and mists were darkening in again and robbed us of some superb photographs we had marked down for taking on the homeward way. Some cold days ensued—an unpleasant jar after we had begun to shed cardigans and blankets. Still . . . the Great Cold was definitely over, and the sound of flowing water was a delight to the ear after the ice-bound months. An even greater delight was the sight of people working in their fields again, and all our jolly children friends romping about. Some of the women and children living quite near we had not laid eyes on for months.

Everyone was frantically busy. When the women weren't actually carrying manure out to the fields in their baskets and dumping it at regular intervals or squatting down to spread out the heaps evenly over the surface, they were sitting in groups here and there spinning for dear life in the welcome daylight and chattering like magpies, exchanging the gossip of their homes after the long seclusion. When I came upon any little lot I hadn't seen before, they hailed me eagerly: "We *have* missed you!" they shouted. And I laughed and said: "But I have been there all the time and *I* have gone out every day; it is you who have been hiding in your houses, crouching over the fire!" "That's true," was the laconic answer, "it was winter." It was fun to be amongst them all again and find them as natural and friendly and as merry as ever, and so very much neater and cleaner than I should be if I had their work to do and only icy water to wash in.

By the third week in February we could with a microscope begin to detect the first shoots of the winter-sown wheat, and even imagine a slight flush of green on the bare white twigs of the poplars, though the leaf buds had not yet begun to swell perceptibly.

I passed Kaniza's house one day as they were all busy dumping manure and noticed a strange girl helping. I knew that the married sister in Báltit had generously taken over Kaniza's

BARLEY SOWING AND "STARVATION SPRINGTIME"

A month later, by the third week of March, we were well into the Spring. The winter wheat formed a bright green carpet on the shelf-like fields, about three-quarters of our Aliábád ground being given over to it.

The barley which the men had sown after the Bopfau, just the other day it seemed, was showing green over the most of the rest, and would presently outstrip the wheat and ripen first. The only brown fields left were those that were being prepared for vegetables and potatoes. No leaves were yet showing anywhere, but fat red apricot buds looked promising.

As autumn drew in we had begun to feel a little disappointed in our Hunza friends whose marvellous field-walls we had always admired so much with not one single stone out of its place. There were breaches here and there, sometimes quite big ones, and paths were often blocked by a fall of stones, and no one seemed to bother. This puzzled us as out of character, but as soon as the last fear of frost was over, every spare moment was spent by men and boys restoring the countryside to its normal state of faultless tidiness. We now saw the reason of the apparent neglect. The frost and ice simply tear the walls to pieces, and to repair them during winter would be sheer folly. We might perhaps have divined this; but now at any rate we knew.

One early day in March we saw Khano on the mountain side walking slowly and with circumspection. This was so strange a sight that we went over to investigate. "What are you carrying so carefully under your *chogo*?" "My first kid," he said, opening his cloak to display the tiny head with triumph. "That's the mother there. I'm expecting four to-morrow. I do hope they won't get born at night in the byre. I'd rather they came when I'm out with them alone." "How do you happen to have so many goats?" we asked. "Oh, I'm herding for the Yerpa now. He's no boys of his own, you see." How crazy it would be to call a lad like that "uneducated" because he doesn't happen to have learned to read or write! He is proudly able to act as accoucheur to his goats, which few of our youngsters at home would feel equal to. We enquired later of Dido and the rest what sort of wages Khano was able to earn, and their view was that he was probably not given

000 with. They are the greatest possible contrast to the alert, intelligent Burusho: possibly there is more than sugar in a diet of apricots!

• 132 312 Quite suddenly after the first lovely rush of water the channels went silent again. Not that they were ice-bound, but it seems that the first warmth of the year melts all the recently fallen snow off the top, which gives you your first rush. After that comes a pause before the sun has gathered heat enough to melt the older, hardened snow and make an impression on the glaciers. This arrangement of Nature's suits the peasants well.. The first rush waters their new planted barley and springing wheat; the pause gives them time to clear out all the silt and sand that is cluttering up their channels, and to repair the walls. They find the silt a useful top-dressing for their fields. All the menfolk worked hard to get their irrigation works into trim before the real water flow began. Meantime all the *pferis* near us were empty, and poor Sagi had to go a mile or more to draw water for baths and washing up, in addition to his usual pilgrimage for our drinking water. So we installed an assistant for him.

524 534 Among the enlivening sounds of these early Spring days was the tootle-tootle of boys' whistles. At a certain moment when they consider the degree of sap flowing in the willows is right for their purpose, they cut themselves sections of various lengths. With great ingenuity they coax off the bark in great flute-like pipes and make an extraordinary variety of whistles with many notes. The deepest notes are achieved by inserting a finer pipe into a larger one, and thus providing a lining to the latter as it were. The same procedure that yields a whistle will also supply a squirt, a pop-gun, or a pea-shooter, and these various toys diversify the day.

262 Despite the pleasure which water, work, and sunlight bring, the season of Spring awakes no poet's raptures in the Hunza heart. "Starvation Springtime" would have given Keats an odd title for an Ode. Many weeks before the new barley was ripe for cutting every household round us had already run out of every sort of flour, many also out of potatoes and apricots.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

original right-hand loops off on to the left fingers carefully crossing each pair of threads as she does so. Widely drawing her two hands apart Apícho then drove the set of crossed threads down on to the edge of the cap, where Kaníza secured the twelve-fold plait with a large stitch. This was repeated *ad infinitum*, the braid only showing on the right side of the cap and the long ugly stitches on the wrong. The process looks rather like cat's-cradle. I had always wondered why, when they take such infinite trouble over the minute cross-stitch embroidery of their caps and the hand-plaited twelve-ply braid, they finished the cap off with these long stitches. I also wondered why it seemed impossible to detach the braid without its ravelling out. I now saw that braid-weaving and stitching were part of one elaborate process.

By July 1st the luckier folk were already cutting their barley and clearing a field for their threshing floor without waiting for the formal harvest-initiation ceremonies of the Ginání, the date of which is naturally fixed by the Mir to suit Báltít, 1,500 feet higher, and consequently some days behind Aliábád. All our potatoes were by now in full flower and our wheat was turning "fox-colour."

On July 5th we rode over to Báltít for yet another of the Hunza festivals, and ye Gods! it was hot on the road—90 degrees in the shade—and we had to start at the very hottest time of day, about 2 p.m. The Mir gave us tea in his nice shady grass-grown apple orchard before we remounted and climbed up to the Fort. It is not easy to convey how steep the road is that in Báltít corresponds to the Mall. Your pony steps from one boulder to the next with a great lurch, his spine almost vertical, and for my part I could only just stick on by my usual technique of thrusting my stirrups back to the root of his tail and firmly gripping his mane with my right hand. The road runs between high stone walls and zigzags wildly. The little box-like stone houses of the capital are piled on top of each other in the craziest way—town-planning has to accommodate itself to the vagaries of a precipitous mountain side. They are indescribably picturesque, but you would not think them possible to live in, yet they provide a high degree of simple comfort.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

Chapter 28

FINALITIES

Our final weeks in Hunza were overcrowded with unavailing attempts to fill all the lacunæ of over a year's work, and working was not rendered easier by a temperature of 105 degrees in the shade, nor by the fact that we were both beginning to feel the strain of an intensive fifteen months at close on 8,000 feet (although we had not been consciously conscious of the altitude), and were undeniably somewhat played out.

We had to try to take all the photographs—moving or still—that had hitherto escaped us, develop and print the latter, and keep up to the end our practice of giving copies to the interested parties.

Two lines of enquiry in particular demanded attention. Until faith in the purely scientific and disinterested character of DL's intentions had been firmly established, he had refrained from any attempt to map in detail the inhabited country immediately about us, or to enquire too closely into the amount of land belonging to any given household. Such activities would inevitably have given rise to the fear that he had been sent to make a survey for Government as a prelude to land taxation. Now that such fears were unlikely to arise—and would not impede us greatly if they did—we toiled up and down the steep and rocky tracks, taking sights, pacing distances, measuring fields, and making calculations. A country harder to survey, even in the rough and ready fashion which alone was possible, it would be difficult to conceive. It was impossible to find even twenty yards of level ground in a straight line to make a base from which anything else was visible; pacing distance was almost otiose when spurs jutted and angles re-

No. XXXVI

Šɪkamatiŋɛ Čaγa.

000 Hunzulo joŋ doχ'ərčumɛ Zuŋ'a·tiŋɛ gir'amulər aaku·riŋ di·mor (*or*, di·mi kɛ) han dastu·ran qadi·mɪtsum bilum, i·ɛ i·k Šɪkamatiŋ se.iba·n.

Šɪk'amatiŋər ha·kum jama·at ud'im kɛ han pfi·ti ečа·n (*or*, ečam). Pfi·ti makuči kaman γuto·pus ečа·n. Iɛc.ulo čutan dɛl tiš ečа·n. Iɛc pfi·ti.ɛ i·k Kɛči Kičа·li se.iba·n.

Be·ruman dɛniŋ man'i Šɪkamatiŋ Hunzulo aiy'e·čа·n.

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1 *dɛxərčumɛ* — An instance of the rather rare use of the Absolute Pres. pc.

137 132 The opening of the blossom begins first in the lower and warmer parts of the valley and gradually extends up the valley and up the hill-sides as warmth increases with the advance of the season. On the hillside facing Nagir one may see the apricot trees at the higher levels still in full blossom when those at the lower levels have shed their flowers.

girumɛlər — i. e. when the trees on the boundary of the lands belonging to the *Zuŋɛ·tiŋ* community came into blossom. All this part of Nagir is in full view of Baltit and the adjacent populous tract in Hunza which contains the villages of Ganesh and Haiderabad, Aliabad and Hassanabad.

000 The custom is described as a Hunza custom. I do not know whether it does, or did, exist in Nagir.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

131 Hunza is a country that lies along the Hunza River from Secunderabad to the Chinese border, a distance of somewhere around 200 miles, but no one has ever actually measured it. At the narrowest point it is less than half a mile wide. At its broadest, it is not quite two miles. Usually the only piece of flat land in a village [133] [134] is the polo field. Good, rich, deep soil as Westerners know it is absolutely unknown in Hunza.

311 Whenever a house is built here, they seldom ever use [361] a piece of fertile soil or soil of any kind. They usually erect it on rock or on a steep hillside where that piece of land could not have been used for agriculture anyway.

[241] Practically every bit of farm land is terraced. It can be said, it is actually cut out of the rocks of the mountainside which is the north bank of the Hunza River.

[134] Of the total length of 200 miles, only a small fraction is at all arable. Most of it is solid rock or terrain so steep that horticulture of any nature is impossible.

312 Rainfall is scanty. They cannot depend upon it at all [132] for crops. In order to get sufficient water, hand built and similarly maintained conduits bring water down [241] from glaciers. These conduits are carefully erected and trained to run alongside the villages where the water can be trapped to flow where desired and used to irrigate their lands, also for drinking and all other necessary purposes.

There are four main conduits in Hunza and they are as follows:

Murku—This is at the highest level of all the aqueducts and carries the most water.

Barbar—Supplies the Baltit-Altit area.

Dala—This is the longest—extends as far as Aliabad. Supplies Kerimabad.

Hamachi—The smallest which runs as far as the tiny village Ganesh, located on a cliff's edge.

177 their salt and soon there will be a few more items added
263 and, as more of their people go out of the country to
439 earn a living and come back to visit or retire, more of civilization's curses will be brought back with them.

165 The doctor rather clearly indicated that infant mor-
114 tality was not as low as some writers would like us to believe. I repeat—he made this quite clear.

164 Now I'll let you decide how it ties in with the statements made by Sir Robert McCarrison: "During the period of my association with these people I never saw a case of asthenic dyspepsia, of gastric or duodenal ulcer, of appendicitis, of mucous colitis, of cancer. . . . Among these people, the abdomen oversensitive to nerve impressions, to fatigue, anxiety, or cold was unknown. Indeed their buoyant abdominal health has, since my return to the West, provided a remarkable contrast with the dyspeptic and colonic lamentations of our highly civilized communities."

276 Smoking in general is not an addiction in Hunza. The water-pipe or hubble-bubble is used by some of the people, usually at gatherings or ceremonies. It is then passed around in a wide circle, each one taking a puff
[562] or two. The women are included, but only after all the men have finished.

Some of the citizens use snuff. It is tobacco mixed with the ash of a plant called "sopa," which is indigenous to that area. They take the tobacco and the sopa ash, put in a dash of water, stir it up and mix it into a paste. Then they place gobs of this paste under their lip, exactly the same as the snuff chewer does in the West, although this practice has been dying out in the Western world.

164 Just how much of the health of the people of Hunza
132 is due to the fact that they get a lot of sunlight? That is a most pertinent question and one that will take a lot

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

of study before an answer can be given. They do get more sunshine than the Nagirwals—of that there is no doubt. While in Nagir fields are definitely in better tilth, their land is deeper, they have broader and more fertile valleys and can grow more and better food, yet undoubtedly the people of Hunza are by far the handsomer, healthier, more industrious and more energetic.

For my part I wasn't completely sold on the principle that the people of Hunza did have much more sunlight than the people of Nagir and I debated the matter with a few individuals. But each of them maintained stoutly that they did and claimed that they had scientific proof that Hunza did get more sunlight.

The last man with whom I did battle on the subject was Dr. Hermann Berger of West Germany. From his investigations he said that he had reached the conclusion positively and unequivocally, that the northern slope of the mountains through which the Hunza River flowed did get more sunlight than the southern slope which was Nagir.

As I found considerable difficulty and doubt concerning the theory of the people of Hunza getting more sunlight than the people of Nagir, I decided to draw a little chart that would illustrate the situation as I eventually found it to be. After seeing the drawing I think it will prove to you that the principle is natural and reasonable. (*See Fig.* 1.)[1]

[1] [facing p. 390 - ANALYST]

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

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The Hunzans are conceded to have superior health to their neighbors. Nagir land is more shaded by mountains. (*Figure 1.*)

256

A water powered stone mill used by the Hunzans for making flour. (*Figure 2.*)

[Facing p. 390]

[p. 390-A]

342 keep many secrets from his neighbors. From what I
361 saw, it was obvious that when a house was built in Hunza no attempt was made to level the ground but it was allowed to stand as nature made it and the house was erected according to the natural levels, dips, falls or heights.

As we wandered around the little Hunzan homes in this area, we had to climb up to get to this one, we had to drop down to examine that one and there were really no two on an identical level.

●132 Then I remembered that the average annual rainfall in Hunza was 2 inches and to myself I thought, "Mighty good thing, because if it rained any more than that, what a quagmire this area would be!"

122 We heard the clatter of hooves and, looking up, we saw Jahangir's guide coming back and leading another horse. This meant we'd be ready to take off in a couple of minutes, so Cec and I worked our way towards the road.

Soon all of our belongings were firmly balanced on the horse's back and we were ready to start for the Hasanabad Bridge.

184 into the "fine, barrel chests" reported
146 by travelers. (I found that when they took off their shirts the fine, barrel chests revealed strong asymmetry, with ribs notably warped by rickets.) During my first winter, I developed a typical case of beriberi, even though my diet was more varied than theirs and was adequate in quantity.

133 The basic trouble rests not with the
161 Hunzas, who are neat, intelligent, and
[18] hard-working, but with their country. There is no flat land in all of Hunza.
[36] Villages and farms are built on alluvial
[31] cones—fan-shaped masses of gravel dumped by streams rushing from mountain glaciers down into the valleys—and the small cultivated areas simply are not extensive enough to support the constantly increasing population. (The Mir estimated the population of his country at 25,000 in 1951. According to one of the last of the British agents stationed in nearby Gilgit, Hunza's population was increasing at the rate of 30 per cent each
[67] decade. Rising emigration and the absence of written records obscure the reality, as one might imagine.)

311 Hunza's slopes are so steep they
241 must be terraced by the laborious construction of hand-built retaining walls of boulders. I measured one cultivated slope of 60 degrees—so steep that the retaining walls were twice as high as the miniature plots they supported. And sometimes Hunza farmers will even create arable soil on top of bare rock. After a crescent-shaped wall at the foot of any fairly gentle rock slope is built high enough so the top of the wall is level with the top of the slope, the wall is carefully chinked and mud-calked, then sandy water from the nearest irrigation ditch is admitted to make a small pond. When the sand settles out, the clear water is drained, and more sandy water is admitted. This process is repeated for about two years, until enough sand accumulates to allow cultivation.

134 Much of the "soil" of Hunza fields
311 is thus not really soil. Rather, it is a jumble of unweathered boulders,
[32] gravel, and sand. Since Hunza is a
[13] cool but exceedingly dry desert, practically no plant food is formed. The scant rain that falls soaks rapidly through the spongy sand, leaches out any trace of plant food that may be present, and carries it down to the river. Not even sagebrush will grow on the unirrigated areas, so most slopes are barren. Newly irrigated areas are

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir
Burusho AV7

181 829 ness of their uncomfortable houses leaves an indelible mark on the national character.

342 It must be remembered that a house in the [351] Hindu-Kush has no glass windows, no comfortable fire-place and chimney corner. The better-class houses are built round a courtyard, but the rooms rarely have windows, all light comes from the 354 open door or from a skylight. Immediately below 352 the skylight is a square open hearth, on which smoulders a fire; round this run raised platforms, on which are the beds and household paraphernalia; the smoke, before escaping through the roof, fills the whole room, blackens walls and pillars, and chokes the un- [132] fortunate inhabitants. If it is very cold, or raining and snowing heavily, the skylight is shut, the room is in pitchy darkness but for a sputtering torch, and the atmosphere horrible. It is no wonder that an existence under these circumstances should be rather depressing, and in Nagar the people get the full benefit of it, for there are several villages which during December and January only get twenty 461 minutes' sun a day; some, I believe, get none. The men having no agricultural work on hand, owing to the land being frost-bound, there is practically nothing for them to do during the winter months but to sit idly round their smouldering fires for about sixteen hours out of the twenty-four.

133 487 Nagar has practically no outlet except down the river to Gilgit. Shut in to the east by impassable mountains, and to the south by the great Rakapushi range, there is only the bare possibility of reaching 487 Baltistan by the Hispar pass: there is a tradition that the road was once used, but it is very doubtful if